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ABSTRACT

Responding to the mandates of the Educational Reform Bill in Texas, new emphasis has been placed on the role and responsibilities of substitute teachers. This paper describes a 5-hour substitute teacher seminar that all substitute teachers and aide applicants are required to attend. The 2-day seminar focuses on the contents of the "Substitute Teacher Handbook" and also includes presentations by regular elementary and secondary teachers on the practical problems faced in a "real-life" classroom. Excerpts from the handbook cover general instructions for substitute teachers, the substitute teacher's responsibilities to the schools, the responsibilities of the regular classroom teacher, and how a substitute teacher can contribute to the school district's public relations. (JD)

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# Teacher Education For The 21st Century

## ATE Mid-America Regional Conference

**October 4, 5, 6, 1989**
**Texoma Resort Lodge**
**Kingston/Durant**
**Oklahoma**

ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

Improve Your Teachers' Working Conditions:
Train Your Subs

Thursday, October 5, 1989 2:30 P.M.

JAMES B. LANG
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"Improve Your Teachers' Working Condition: Train Your Subs"

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

In 1984, with the implementation of Chapter 75 and HB72, the classroom in Texas, as many of us knew it, changed. As the schools districts moved deeper and deeper into the reform movement, the Silsbee (ISD) administration saw the need to have their substitute teachers and aides better trained as they replaced the classroom teacher during periods of absences. The approach, simply stated, is that the district cannot afford "babysitters" when the classroom teacher is out if we are to carry out the reform mandates. Hence, a mandatory training requirement for all substitute teachers and aides in Silsbee Public Schools.

The seminar content includes:

- Introduction
  - SBOE Philosophy
  - Impact of Chapter 75 and HB72
  - Well-balanced Curriculum
  - Discipline Management
  - High School Graduation
  - Silsbee ISD Attendance Policy
  - District Goals
  - TTAS
- Importance of a Good Sub
- Substitute Teacher Manual
- Requirements for Substitute Teacher and Aide
  - Local
- View from the "REAL WORLD - the Classroom" - Lynda Ingram & Gaye Lokey
- Question and Answer

The objectives of the seminar are:

1. To establish the importance of trained subs in the classroom and community.
2. To show ways to improve teachers' working conditions through use of trained subs.
3. To show ways to improve learning climate through use of trained subs.

The method of the seminar's five (5) hour presentation in the first half is conducted by the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. This segment is mostly concerned with the rules and regulations as they affect the classroom. It also includes the discussion of the districts' sub manual. The real key to the seminar is the section we call the new from the "Real World." Two teachers-one elementary and one secondary - present the session.

The bottomline for the district is the teachers now know the incoming subs have some idea of the expectations for these individuals when the sub is in their classrooms. The teachers are more comfortable when they are out as a result of this training program.

# "WANTED: SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS - - - NOT BABYSITTERS"

GAYE LOKEY, SILSBEE MIDDLE SCHOOL
LYNDA INGRAM, KIRBY ELEMENTARY
JAMES B. LANG, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION

SILSBEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Beginning in the 1984-85 school year, teachers and administrators were "surprised" by the immediate reforms mandated by the Educational Reform Bill (HB72). The Curriculum Reform, Chapter 75, (the well-balanced curriculum with its essential elements), was not a surprise since school districts had been expecting its implementation. However, the surprise came with the immediate changes of HB72. It became apparent that the Texas classroom would not be the same. Teachers had:

- .one year to bring students up to grade level in their achievement.
- .half-year to prepare for the Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers (TECAT).
- .one year to learn what was expected under the Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS).

After the initial shock, many positive things have come out of the reform movement. One of the most favorable actions occured in the classrooms across Texas.

Because of the greater demands placed upon teachers for student's performances, the job of a substitute teacher has also become one of an educator from the community. According to Ron Edmond's Effective School Correlates, to be effective a school must maintain an instructional focus that supports academic achievement for all children. Valuable classroom time cannot be wasted while the teacher is away and the substitute teacher is there. Putting it plainly, substitutes can no longer be "babysitters."

The substitute teacher has one of the most difficult assignments in school. They must be able to step into any classroom situation: K-12, self-contained, departmentalized, individualized, regimented, gifted and talented, special education, physical education, woodworking shop, art appreciation, vocational agriculture, or computer science, and carry on just as the teacher would. Teachers work under pressure to teach all essential elements, document mastery, reteach and retest, and at the same time, hit every indicator on the TTAS at the drop of a hat. In thirty minutes notice (if they're lucky) a substitute must step into the same shoes that classroom teachers have nine months to fill. Because of this pressurized situation, substitute teacher training has become essential to the performance of an effective school.

## SILSBEE ISD SUBSTITUTE TEACHER SEMINAR: A MODEL

Beginning in 1984, James B. Lang, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum for Silsbee Independent School District, and teacher aide Pat Boyd prepared a "Substitute Teacher Handbook" to be distributed to new substitutes. Feedback from classroom teachers indicated a need for more extensive training for potential substitute teachers and aides. Responding to that need, in 1986 the SISD Board of Trustees approved a policy requiring that all substitute teacher and aide applicants, in addition to a minimum number of college hours, must attend a 5-hour seminar sponsored by the District's Community Education program.

The two-night seminar is presented in three segments. Mr. Lang provides copies of the handbook which contains basic information about the goals of the state and district. The primary importance of the handbook is to express to potential subs the philosophy of the district in regards to their role. Emphasis is placed on their becoming a part of the school district's educational community and it's accompanying responsibilities.

Further, it has a description of the different campuses' procedures, bell schedules and teaching assignments for each campus and is kept updated through a mailing list. The handbook is also a treasure house of valuable information covering topics such as learning styles, identification of "at-risk" students, behavioral characteristics of each age group, characteristics of exceptional children, how to improve children's self-esteem, school board policies, discipline management plans, the TTAS instrument and the five correlates of effective schools. Potential "subs" often feel bombarded with information during this first session and fear that they must have chosen the wrong profession!

The second half of the seminar is appropriately entitled by its presenters - "The View From the Real World" (subtitled - "In the Trenches"). These two (2) sessions focus on a "common sense" approach to substituting. An elementary teacher and a secondary teacher join forces to present a "real-life" picture of what to expect once they are called to "sub." The key to the whole seminar lies in the use of these "real world" teachers to tell the potential substitute teacher or aide what it is like in "the trenches."

Sub-candidates are warned to be ready at any and all times---just like the Boy Scouts--"Be prepared." The presenters warn: "On the day your hair needs washing, the stand-by babysitter has stood you up, and all your stockings have runners, will be the day you'll receive a call at 8:00 A.M. to please try to be there at 7:45 A.M. because that teacher has duty." Another bit of advice given to elementary and secondary substitutes is to "wear comfortable shoes and leave your Harlequin romance books' at the house because subbing will be one of the hardest day's work you'll ever put in."

When the district's teachers were asked their chief bit of advice

to pass along to the seminar participants, the most common concern was "Please follow the lesson plans." In a book, SUCCESSFUL SUBBING by Carol Fuery, she warns: "Don't read through lesson plans and decide they won't work. They are often based on the regular teacher's experience with this class. Young people love routine, and they need the teacher's routine to make them feel secure." Subs are urged to visit the campuses and meet those responsible for calling them and to share any experiences or special talents they may have which will strengthen their use in the schools.

Elementary substitutes are advised to "find the snitch." The "snitch" is the student who can locate the grade book and teaching manuals, can tell you when "Little Johnny" goes to speech therapy and where the teacher keeps her purse. Snitches are invaluable on the elementary level. However, snitches on the secondary level are few and far between. Substitutes need to be made aware of the "Games Kids Play." Such innovations as "Eat the Clock" (i.e. Get the sub off the subject and we won't have to work.), "I Don't Understand" (i.e. Get the sub to re-explain everything so we won't have time to work.), or "I need to go to the .... (i.e. Get the sub to let everyone in the class out and there's no one left to work) can leave the secondary substitute frazzled and worn.

Teachers have to monitor their classes constantly to keep all students "on task". Substitute teachers have the same responsibility. They are told to "walk the beat", keeping their eyes open for notepassing, aspiring artists and the inevitable ballpoint pen engineer. These students can "dilly-dally" away precious minutes and surprisingly not have anything to show for their (or the sub's) efforts. All students believe that teachers have eyes in the backs of their heads. Substitutes are let in on a professional secret: never turn your back on a class and, by all means, never wear clothes that have on them anything resembling a target! They are

advised to be firm, fair, and consistent with their charges.

On a more serious note, potential substitute teachers are told they are expected to hold in professional confidence any information about the school (pupils, teachers, parents and principals) which might be gained while substituting.

Subs are encouraged to establish a rapport with their classes but at the same time maintain a delicate balance of being a caring source of authority. Substitutes are asked to remain professional at all times and not to get too "comfortable" with their students. One sub lost any vestige of authority by allowing students to call him "Uncle Bob". Needless to say, the "Uncle Bob's" of the world have no place in a classroom striving for academic excellence.

In summary, substitute teachers are encouraged to remember the three "P Words" of teaching: Be Polite, Be Professional, and Be Positive. Parents in the district have entrusted the education of their children to teachers and they, as substitutes for those teachers, need to have that same commitment to education.

A movie several years ago entitled "Teachers" gave several delightful insights into the teaching career. One of the highlights was the substitute teacher, in reality an escapee from a mental institution, who taught by enacting historical events while wearing the full costumes of the time. George Washington, Napoleon, U.S. Grant, Julius Caesar were all brought to life by this mental patient; students were inspired to learn and excelled in this history class. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the sub's true identity was discovered; he was "taken away by mem in white suits." The statement this humorous episode made came through loud and clear to regular teachers: Sometimes it takes an "outsider" to excite children about learning.

Substitute teachers have a place in an effective school striving for

excellence. The better prepared, more confident and relaxed a new substitute is when entering the classroom; the less likely he is to "babysit" and the more likely he is to become a facilitator of the learning process for those students in his charge.

Two important factors have emerged from the seminar. First of all the teachers feel more comfortable when they have to be out of their classroom, knowing trained substitutes replace them. Secondly, once an individual goes through the seminar, they know for sure that yes they do want to sub or no this is not for me. Either way our district has found a way to answer the wanted poster for the real substitute teacher.

SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION: Texas Study of Secondary Education Research Journal, September, 1989.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

In addition to the following instructions, you will receive further information concerning your assignment and building regulations when you report to the school.

1. You are requested to accept assignment which you have indicated you will accept in the Silsbee system.

2. When you receive a call for a substitute assignment, please be certain that you (a) have a pencil and pad by the telephone to write down your instructions, (b) write down the name of the school, (c) get the teacher's name and assignment for whom you are working, (d) report first to the principal's office upon arrival at the assigned school and ask for the secretary assigned to calling Substitute teachers/aides.

3. Accept the responsibility for helping to create and maintain cordial relationships between teachers, pupils, and the school and community. Your role as a substitute is professional, even though you may not be the regular teacher.

4. You are expected to be on duty the entire day and perform all duties of the regular teacher, unless otherwise requested by the school's administrative staff.

5. The plans provided by the regular teacher would be followed as nearly as possible, and the regular class routine should be maintained. Please leave a note for the teacher, relating how much of the lesson plan you were able to accomplish, and list any special problems that might have occurred during the day

6. Unless requested by the regular teacher, do not assign written work and leave it to be graded. Written work assigned which is beyond the lesson plans of the regular teacher should be graded and left for examination. On long term assignments, such work should be reviewed and recorded, unless otherwise directed.

7. Complete whatever reports are requested, both for the school office and for the regular teacher.

8. Before leaving at the close of the day, report to the principal's office to determine if you will be needed the following day.

When teachers have made a commitment to substitute, they should remember that the principal, the teacher who is absent, and the students are relying on them to be there. If any emergency occurs making it impossible to report, the substitute should notify the principal immediately.

Substitute teachers and aides must be on the approved substitute list. Have 15 college hours or more and have an application on file with references. Aides must have a high school diploma or GED.

## YOUR COMMITMENT

By your request for a place on the list of substitute teachers who are available to serve, you accept a commitment to teach when you are called.

If a prior teaching engagement or a real and compelling personal reason demands that you decline a request, give that reason to the principal/or designee who calls you. School officials know that it sometimes is impossible for you to comply with a request to teach, but good practice and courtesy entitle them to the reason why you cannot.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS TO THE SCHOOLS

1. Report to the building principal promptly. Given sufficient advance notice, he/she should report at the same time the regular classroom teachers report for duty.

2. Follow the program of the regular classroom teacher as much as possible. Mark or make note of plans incomplete and/or revised. Pages that have "T" before them indicate page in teacher's manual. Grade papers that are turned in unless otherwise requested. Erase board and leave room in order.

3. Ask for any special direction the principal may suggest and also about the regular classroom teacher's special duties for the day. Do not trade duty.

4. Locate the classroom teacher's mail box and check bulletin board if time permits.

5. Introduce yourself to neighboring classroom teachers. Develop a relationship with the teachers.

6. Acquaint yourself with fire and emergency drill regulations, assigned exits, and refuge area procedures.

7. Find the classroom teacher's daily schedule, plan book, seating charts, record book, textbooks, and other needed materials. Become familiar with the reading levels (each level is taught differently).

8. Avoid changing the seating arrangement or any other parts of the room organization except for temporary grouping of pupils for instruction or committee work.

9. Maintain high standards of ethics and avoid comparisons of teacher-pupil learning situations. Be positive with students NOT "You were bad last year, I hope you've improved!"

10. Supervision of halls and corridors is a responsibility of ALL teachers especially when pupils are coming into the building or leaving the building at bell time.

11. You are expected to maintain order in an atmosphere of learning. Also be aware of differences in attitudes and behavior at various grade levels.

12. Take an interest in the students you have that day.

13. Be strict enough to let students know you mean business. Be friendly and have the quality of being funny.

14. "Leave school at school." Do not discuss students and staff.

15. The greater the range of the classes you teach, the greater your opportunity. Your reputation for reliability is weakened each time you say no. Find recognition of your good work in the smiles of the kids when they see you coming and the acceptance of the staff when you check in.

16. In most of the schools there are some students that have Special Education classes, they will need to be at that class at a certain time.

17. Learn the process of taking up lunch money, picture money, year book money, etc.

18. Elementary attendance must be checked in the morning at 10:00 a.m. Classroom attendance in middle and high school should be recorded during the second period of the day.

19. Any special procedures as assigned by the building principal or his/her designee.

20. Report serious accidents or illness to the principal or nurse immediately. The nurse will know if the student needs to be sent home or back to class.

21. Leave a brief summary of the work completed, or not completed, as well as any other information that would be helpful to the classroom teacher. (Bulletins, parental notes, assignments, a list of absentees, general information about the day, and problems).

22. DISCIPLINE: Proper discipline, or classroom order, is a prerequisite to good teaching. Be firm, business like, and command respect. Any unusual disciplinary problem should be taken up with the building principal or assistant principal. In cases where corporal punishment is required, it must be administered by the principal or his/her designee. Do not paddle the students!

23. If the substitute is teaching for an extended time, he/she should attend all scheduled meetings. In case of doubt, make inquiry of the building principal.

24. USE THIS HANDBOOK - Become acquainted with it as soon as possible and familiarize yourself with individual school requirements.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER

1. Have the following materials in or on the desk or in the place designated by the building principal.

   a. Daily plans made out in sufficient detail.

   b. Weekly time schedule of classes.

   c. List of pupils' names and seating chart.

   d. List of pupils in various reading groups. (Elementary)

   e. List of supervisory responsibilities such as days on duty at noon, recess, bus duty, etc.

   f. Fire drill and other emergency procedures.

   g. Important or unusual information about any child (physical problems, etc).

2. Have on desk copies of textbooks, manuals, and workbooks being used.

3. Have on desk any procedures designated or required by principal.

## ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

All schools of the Silsbee system are operated under the same policies of the Board of Education.

A substitute teacher is in a position to establish good school-community relationships for the school system and for the individual schools in which he/she will be teaching.

Reaction to the day's work will often be discussed with non-teaching as well as teaching friends and will result in good or poor impressions. We realize that the substitute teacher has a difficult but important task. We wish to utilize every opportunity to help make teaching both pleasant and productive.

It is considered unethical and unprofessional to negatively criticize the school, the class, or individual members of the class with those outside of the school since the period of observation has been of such short duration that accurate, general conclusions cannot be reached.

Through the combined efforts of the regular staff personnel and the substitute teacher, misunderstandings and false impressions may be eliminated. At all times, we welcome the substitute teacher's suggestions as to how we may better the school's services to the substitute teachers and how the substitute teacher can better serve the schools. Suggestions may be made to the principals of the schools, or if you prefer, to the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel. All suggestions will be regarded as confidential.

RESOURCE READING
LIST

BOOKS:

Dodd, Anne Wescott. A Handbook for Substitute Teachers (Springfield, ILL: Charles Thomas Publishers, 1988).

Fuery, Carol. Successful Subbing (Captiva Island, FL: Sanibel Sand-dollar Publications, 1988).

Pronin, Barbara. Substitute Teaching (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

Redwine, Mary Frances. Substitute Teacher's Handbook (Belmont, CA: David S. Lake Publishers, 1970).

PAMPHLETS/PUBLICATIONS:

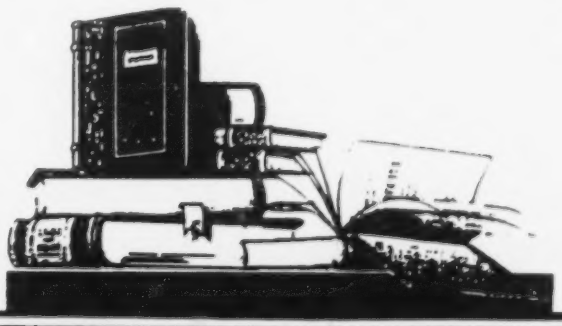
DeBryn, Robert L. "Preparing Students For a Substitute". (Manhatten, Kansas: The Master Teacher, 1987).

Lokey, Gaye, Ingram, Lynda, Lang, James B. "Wanted: Substitute Teachers--- Not BabySitters". SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION: Texas Study of Secondary Eduction Research Journal, September 1989.

Lang, James B., Ingram, Lynda, Lokey, Gaye. "Substitute Teachers/Aides: Partners In Your Educational Community" IN PREPARATION.

Boyd, Pat and Lang, James B. A Handbook for Substitutes

Teachers Within the Silsbee Public Schools. (Unpublished: April, 1984).



Other Districts With Substitute Teaching Seminars:

. Allen ISD
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. Kountze ISD
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. Lumberton ISD
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